



Public Amenities Committee Summary

Wed. Nov. 12, 2008

10:30 a.m.

Conference Room 391

Committee Members Present: Lehmann, Chair; Madison, Vice-Chair; Johnson
Other Council Present: Garcia, Montero

Agenda: Winter Park Recreation Association agreement amendments
Denver Mountain Parks Master Plan

1. Winter Park Recreational Association minor amendments to Supplemental VII

Committee Action

The Committee approved the proposed administrative amendments to Supplemental VII of the Agreement between Denver and the Winter Park Recreational Association.

Summary of Discussion

Claude Pumilia, Chief Financial Officer and WPRC Board Member; Rick Pederson, WPRC Board Member; and Liz Orr, WPRC Administrator, explained the six proposed amendments.

- **Citizen Directors:** Current language requires that they “be a resident of the City of Denver”. Proposal is to add “...or have his or her principal place of business in the City of Denver”. Citizen members, past and current, have included people not residents of Denver.
- **Right to grant utility easements:** WPRC has authority to grant easements to Intrawest for benefit of development, but there is no clear authority to grant easements to benefit the operation of the resort itself, such as for additional water pipelines, without processing an ordinance through City Council and the Mayor. Proposal is to add language allowing WPRC to grant “...non-exclusive utility easements, rights-of-way and licenses over, across, through and under its property for the purposes of permitting, facilitating and providing for operations of the Winter Park Resort”.
- **Records inspection:** Current language requires that all books and records be maintained “...in the City & County of Denver”. Older records are stored at Winter Park or at a nearby off-site storage facility. Proposal is to add language 1) allowing records to be kept in their current locations; and 2) allowing files maintained electronically and accessible in the City to be deemed located in the City.
- **Notices:** Current language requires WPRC to give prompt notice to the City of any notices of any kind and nature that it receives from or delivers to Intrawest, and that WPRC prove a copy

of its decisions or actions regarding any such notices.

Proposal is to add "(unless such notices/responses relate to the sale of Developable Land under the Option Agreement)". WPRA has hundreds of notices related to land sales, and most of it is not worthy of transmittal to the City attorney's office. The City will continue to receive notice of actual land sales. Patrick Wheeler, Assistant City Attorney, said he is comfortable with deletion of the identified notices, mostly dealing with land sales negotiations.

- **Insurance:** Risk Management is required to review WPRA's insurance every three years. Most WPRA insurance is held by Intrawest Operations.
Proposal is to add language in italics to the sentence ".....shall reevaluate the reasonableness of the amounts and types of insurance *held by the Association and by the tenant under the Lease on behalf of the Association* every three (3) years..."
- **Typographical error:** Current language refers to "contract rights and choices in action".
Proposal is to correct the terminology to "contract rights and *choses* in action

2. Denver Mountain Parks Master Plan

Committee Action

The Committee had no official action to take, but indicated that Parks & Recreation should move forward with implementation and expressed interest in pursuing increased funding, partnership and marketing opportunities, as well as officially adopting the Plan as a supplement to the Comprehensive Plan.

Summary of Discussion

Scott Robson, Deputy Manager for Parks & Planning, said this is the first master plan for the Denver Mountain Parks, and it provides an excellent tool for management and for building partnerships with the host jurisdictions (Jefferson, Douglas, Clear Creek, and Grand counties). Having a Master Plan in place also strengthens grant applications for funding from sources such as Great Outdoors Colorado. He thanked Councilwoman Lehmann and Landri Taylor, Co-Chairs of the Mountain Parks Advisory Group, and Bart Berger, President, Denver Mountain Parks Foundation.

Susan Baird, Project Manager, presented an overview of the Mountain Parks Master Plan.

Background

- Mountain Parks was envisioned in early 20th Century as an extension of the City Beautiful movement, and the City began purchasing land in the mountains in 1912-14 based on The Olmsted Plan.
- The Denver Mountain Parks (DMP) system now includes 14,141 acres in 4 counties; 25 accessible parks; 21 conservation/wilderness areas.
- Stars of the system are Red Rocks, Mt. Evans, Buffalo Bill Grave Site & Museum, and Winter Park Ski Resort.
- Daniels, Genesse, Dedisse and Newton parks comprise the heart of the system.
- Several properties in the system are strategically purchased mountain peaks to protect views from the accessible DMP.
- In 1920, Denver's population was 250,000, nearly 78% of the 6-county region's population; Denver now represents less than 25%.

- The City of Boulder and the counties of Adams, Arapahoe, Boulder, Douglas and Jefferson have implemented dedicated mill levies to support open space (DMP's 0.5 dedicated mill levy established in 1912 was allowed to lapse in 1956).

Research & Public Input

- Key questions included:
 - Do Denver residents use and value the DMP system?
 - How do we pay and care for the system?
 - Should another entity (Jefferson County, the State) manage the parks?
 - Should Denver sell the parks?
 - How do we take this system to a world class quality, get more kids and families into the mountains, and improve the experience?
- Created 50-member Advisory Group with multi-county, multi-interest representation.
- Held public meetings in Douglas, Clear Creek and Jefferson counties.
- Researched deeds; 93% of all DMP properties have some type of deed restriction.
- Reviewed park user surveys from 2002 & conducted Marketing Support Intercept Surveys in 2006-2007:
 - Denver residents reporting use of
 - city parks = 78%
 - mountain parks = 68%
 - recreation centers = 41%
 - outdoor swimming pools = 29%
 - 56% of Denver residents reported that the DMP contribute to their quality of life.
 - Regional use of DMP:
 - resident of Denver = 30%
 - resident of county in which the DMP is located = 30%
 - balance of metro area, Colorado & beyond = 30%
 - Use of DMP by ethnicity:
 - Anglo: all DMP users=74%; DMP users/Denver residents=55%
 - Hispanic: all DMP users=21%; DMP users/Denver residents=40%
 - African-American: all DMP users=2%; DMP users/Denver residents=2%
 - Asian: all DMP users=1%; DMP users/Denver residents=1%
- Conducted 1-on-1 interviews with 800 DMP visitors and performed observational studies.
- Held focus groups in 2007, participants of which said:
 - DMP "speak to Denver's character."
 - DMP "make me proud that my city would protect beautiful land for everyone."
 - "I would pay to keep these parks for the future."
 - "I had no idea that these were owned by Denver."
- Held discussions with stakeholders groups.
- Created a website to disseminate information about the planning process and to solicit comments and questions through a blog.
- Historic goals for DMP include:
 - equity of access to recreation
 - A report on the Mountain Park Project in 1911 stated that the "a Mountain Park for Denver will be the first step, and, perhaps, the greatest step, in the great movement of making our mountains available for the people."
 - protection of natural resources
 - connection of people to nature

- economic development
 - A 1913 brochure stated that “If we can stop even half of them [tourists] one day or a week or longer, it will be very profitable to every business man in Denver.”
 - Noting the 1913 brochure, the Mountain Parks Commission in 1915 approved \$5,000 for tourist brochures and information agents.
 - Every year, two of the top ten metro area tourist attractions are Red Rocks and Buffalo Bill Grave Site & Museum, both Denver Mountain Parks.
 - Heritage tourism is a growth industry.

Key Research Findings

- Affirmed that Denver residents use and value the DMP.
- Affirmed the longstanding economic value of DMP in terms of tourism particularly but also business location decisions and direct revenue to Denver.
 - Winter Park contributes \$2.2 M/year to Denver Parks & Recreation capital fund.
- Affirmed that Denver needs to stay current with shifting recreational trends
 - Plan outlines criteria to evaluate new activities and sports.
 - Plan identified rock-climbing, geo-caching, and family camping as uses for future study.

Master Plan Recommendations

- **Key Management Recommendations**
 - **Keep DMP** and the management thereof.
 - **Increase DMP’s operating and capital budget** to raise the quality to the level of other open space parks in the region.
 - Increase DMP’s share of the annual Parks & Recreation \$8-9 M capital fund from an average \$200,000 to at least \$1 M per year.
 - DMP receives 1% of Parks & Recreation’s operating budget and 3% of its capital budget; DMP comprises 70% of the land in the total system.
 - \$2.2 M of the department capital budget is contributed by DMP from Winter Park.
 - Urban parks will receive \$93 M of the 2007 infrastructure bonds and the ongoing capital mill levy; there is capacity to increase DMP’s share.
 - In 2009, Theatres & Arenas will increase parking at Red Rocks by 50 cents, which will be dedicated to DMP.
 - DMP 2009 capital fund is \$700,000.
 - **Research and build necessary collaboration for a dedicated funding** stream, perhaps with a regional mechanism modeled on SCFD.
 - **Build capacity and partnerships**
 - Newly formed DMP Foundation contributed to the cost of the Plan.
 - In talks with Denver Public Schools and Museum of Nature & Science.
 - Identify other organizations for volunteerism, joint projects, etc.
 - **Identify new opportunities**
 - Use DMP history and imagery to merchandise books, clothes, posters, etc. and develop donation programs and events fees with revenue earmarked to DMP.
 - Consider market value of the various parks
 - One site nearly surrounded by quarry; a company has offered to restore the entire property and return it to DMP in exchange for right to quarry.
 - **Increase public awareness** of DMP through communications and marketing.
 - **Develop a set of design guidelines** to ensure that repairs and new construction continue the design legacy.

- **Key Recommendations about Places and Programs**
 - **Protect** the natural, cultural and historic resources
 - develop individual park management plans, design guidelines, and historic designation status
 - **Repair and restore** deteriorating park facilities and underlying natural resources.
 - **Add** cost-effective basic improvements, such as
 - ADA access
 - marketing and maps
 - additional Mountain Park rangers
 - new trails and connections between trails
 - new park amenities
 - Expand the vision
 - DMP has untapped potential to connect people of all ages with nature and the historic American West.
 - Plan recommends visioning, feasibility studies, and partnership-building to plan and build for tomorrow.
 - Find ways to get more people to the less-crowded parks
 - New and expanded partnerships with DPS, DMNS and Beckwourth Mt. Club
 - Use multi-modal access from light-rail, buses with bike racks, new railroad up the mountain.

Councilwoman Johnson congratulated the department on the Plan. She suggested that DMP think in terms of “green” marketing, building on the “greenest Democratic National Convention”.

Councilman Garcia thought \$700,000 for 2009 seemed modest. He suggested that the new infrastructure mill levy be tapped further and the idea of a regional system be explored further.

Mr. Berger thanked Councilwoman Lehmann for pushing for the Master Plan, which was recommended in The Game Plan. He said that \$700,000 is very modest the context of the regional open space. The Mountain Parks Foundation is anxious to help the City.

Councilwoman Lehmann said that the Parks & Recreation Advisory Board reviewed and accepted the Plan, and Council might officially adopt it, but implementation should begin now. Mr. Robson said that work is already being lined up for the 2009 capital projects.

Councilwoman Robb asked if the Game Plan was adopted. Ms. Baird replied that it was approved by the Planning Board and Council officially adopted it as a supplement to the Comprehensive Plan.

*Gretchen Williams
Council Legislative Services, 11-19-08*

s:Committees/Public Amenities/Summary